## Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 **(Original)** A false contour correcting apparatus for reducing a false contour in an image based on a digital image signal, the false contour being caused by digital signal processing performed on the digital image signal, said false contour correcting apparatus comprising:

a double bit change detection circuit for detecting a signal portion in the digital image signal, where a change in graduation between two adjacent pixels is twice a unit of graduation level represented by a digital value, and outputting a signal representing results of the detection as a double bit change detection signal; and

a signal correction circuit for correcting the signal portion in the digital image signal to reduce the false contour based on the double bit change detection signal.

Claim 2 **(Currently Amended)** The false contour correction apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said signal correction circuit is operable to correct ~~corrects~~ the signal portion in the digital image signal into a portion where there exist two one-bit changes each of which is a signal value change corresponding to the unit of graduation level based on the double bit change detection signal.

Claim 3 **(Currently Amended)** A false contour correcting method for reducing a false contour in an image based on a digital image signal, the false contour ~~signal~~ being caused by digital signal processing performed on the digital image signal, said false contour correcting method comprising:

a double bit change detecting operation of detecting a signal portion in the digital image signal, where a change in graduation between two adjacent pixels is twice a unit of graduation level represented by a digital value; and

a correcting operation of correcting the signal portion in the digital image signal to reduce the false contour based on said double bit change detecting operation.

Claim 4 **(Original)** The false contour correcting method according to claim 3, wherein said correcting operation comprises correcting the signal portion in the digital image signal into a portion where there exists two one-bit changes each of which is a signal value change corresponding to the unit of graduation level.